PANEL OF CHAIRMEN.

PRESIDENT: Under Rule 3 (2) of the Travancore Legislative Rules, I have at the commencement of every session of the Assembly to nominate from among the members of the Assembly a panel of not more than two chairmen to preside over the Assembly in the absence of the President and the Deputy President. In accordance with that rule, I nominate Messrs. E. Subramonia Aiyar and N. Ramakrishna Pillai to the Panel of Chairmen for this session.

ELECTION TO THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE.

PRESIDENT: The election of a member to the Standing Finance Committee, in the place of Mr. Kannara Gopala Panickar, will take place on the 11th February 1939, after the regular business of the House is over, under the chairmanship of the Deputy President.

DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS.

Demand II.—Medical.

MR. K. P. PADMANABHA MENON (*Electrical Engineer*): Sir, I move for a supplementary grant of Rs. 3,956 for the maintenance of the electrical installation in the Leper Colony, Noornad.

The motion was put and carried; and the grant was made.

Demand IV.—Public Works Department.

MR. G. B. E. TRUSCOTT (*Chief Engineer*): Sir, I move for a grant of Rs. 2,20,030,

(i) Rs. 2,17,910 for repairing the road between Alwaye and Munnar in connection with the introduction of the Transport Scheme, and

(ii) Rs. 2,120 for additions and alterations to the Cantonment Bungalow

MR. KOTTALIL P. ABRAHAM: What is the kind of work that is sought to be done?

MR. G. B. E. TRUSCOTT: The wooden bridges have to be mostly rebuilt, and the road has to be straightened as far as possible by easing curves; also a considerable amount of remetalling has to be done.

MR. KOTALIL P. ABRAHAM: May I know from the member what was the cost of the road as it was originally constructed?

MR. G. B. E. TRUSCOTT: I cannot give the cost now, Sir. The Transport Scheme for which this work is intended, when it is brought into effect, will be found to be a reproductive one.

PRESIDENT: The honourable member may perhaps explain to the House what the Scheme is.

MR. G. B. E. TRUSCOTT: The scheme is to transport about 8,000 tons of tea in one direction to Cochin, and 12,000 tons of foodstuff and other supplies in the other direction, between Alwaye and Munnar. All this trade up to now has been going outside the State through Tuticorin. But it is proposed now to carry tea to the Cochin Port in

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which the Travancore Government is interested as a partner. Government in the last budget session budgetted for quite a substantial income by way of this transport. It is necessary to construct the bridges and remetal the roads so that we can carry the tea and bring the supplies without any danger to the transport. Not only will we be transporting supplies from Alwaye, but it is likely that a considerable amount of these supplies will be obtained from the Alwaye merchants, and so bring quite a lot of trade to Alwaye.

MR. KOTTALIL P. ABRAHAM: May I know from the member whether this scheme was not contemplated at the time of the last budget session?

MR. G. B. E. TRUSCOTT: It was contemplated, but details had not been settled at that time for us to be in a position to come before the House for any definite request for funds.

MR. KOTTALIL P. ABRAHAM: Is the amount to be spent this year itself?

MR. G. B. E. TRUSCOTT: We shall endeavour to do as much work as we possibly can.

PRESIDENT: Before putting this matter to the vote, I think one or two aspects of the matter may be detailed in as much as the honourable members are naturally jealous that things which could have been contemplated earlier should not be brought in as supplementary grants before the House. In the first place, a definite agreement had to be arrived at, between the planters and their organisation and the Government, by which they would undertake to transport all their produce through Travancore. It may be remembered that at the present moment a ropeway is working by means of which the tea that is produced in the Kannan Devan estates is taken down to the British territory and thence transported to Tuticorin from where the produce is shipped abroad. Similarly, rice and other provisions needed for coolies and other employees of estates are brought in from British territory by ropeway. The present scheme is that the companies will take all the produce through Travancore and to Alwaye. From there arrangements will be made for taking them for shipment at Cochin. Similarly, Alwaye will become enthrapor for the supply of all the provisions needed for the coolies in the estates. That is, Travancore will become the centre of provisions to these coolies and employees, instead of British India as at present. That is a big scheme handling both ways about 24,000 tons, and is expected to be one of the most paying propositions to the State. The actual agreement had to be entered into. Certain negotiations had to be conducted with the Cochin Harbour authorities, and the Government of His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin; and that was the reason why we were not in a position definitely to come before the House earlier; because, until the scheme chrystallised, a request of this nature would have been incompetent.

The motion was then put to vote and carried; and the supplementary grant was made.

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